

# BOD

*Below you will find the biographies of TALS Board of Directors (BOD) members in alphabetical order.*

**Cathy Allshouse** graduated from Southern Methodist University Law School and has worked for both private law firms and Western Kentucky Legal Services before joining Southeast Tennessee Legal Services in Chattanooga where she is program manager. Ms. Allshouse currently handles Order of Protection cases through Tennessee STOP and ARRA funding, elder abuse, family law and serves on the AOC Access to Justice committee. She is a member of the TALS Board, various law groups, the Tennessee STOP Implementation Plan Workgroup and the Tennessee Bar Association Family Law Executive Committee.

**Stacey Angello** moved to Nashville in 1994 for the music business. She has traveled all over the country and world with country music star Jo Dee Messina, singing back-up and playing guitar. Stacey got off the road in 2000 and recorded two CDs of her own - "It's a Girl Thing" and "Follow that Star." To fulfill a life long dream, Stacey decided to go to law school and graduated with honors from Nashville School of Law. She says, "My personal experience in the music business gives me a unique perspective as an attorney and allows me to represent my clients with the clear understanding required to balance the creativity of the music with the reality of the business. Stacey is also passionate about litigation and feels comfortable at both the negotiating table and in the courtroom.

**Wendy Bach** joined the faculty of UTK - Law School in the Legal Clinic in August 2010 after teaching for five years in the Elder Law and Economic Justice clinics at the City University of New York School of Law. Prior to entering teaching, Professor Bach was Director of the Homelessness Outreach and Prevention Project at the Urban Justice Center in New York City and a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society of Brooklyn. Professor Bach's scholarship focuses the accountability of social welfare programs in the U.S. Her scholarship has been published in the Wisconsin and Brooklyn Law Reviews. She received a J.D. degree in 1996 from New York University, graduating magna cum laude and receiving the Eric Dean Bender Prize awarded to a

graduating student who engaged in outstanding public interest work. Professor Bach also holds a Master's Degree in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Larry Barbee** serves as a contractor with the State of Tennessee Family Programs, which provides support and assistance to families of deployed soldiers. Barbee retired in November 2000 with 31 years of military services, twenty of those years as AGR with the Tennessee Army National Guard. He graduated from Tennessee Technology Center in Jackson, TN in 2002 with a double major in General Accounting & Administrative Assistant. He also graduated from the Tennessee School of Religion with a Master of Theology Degree in 2010 and is presently working on his Ph.D in theology. He is the owner of Barbee Bookkeeping & Tax Services where he serves as a Bookkeeping consultant & Tax accountant. He is an elder and church manager with the Saint James Church of God In Christ.

**James (Jim) Barry**, Chief Counsel Corporate and Legacy Litigation for International Paper Company, came to the Company in 1999 from Union Camp Corporation, where he was Assistant General Counsel. Prior to that he was Special Counsel to Jones, Walker in Baton Rouge La. practicing environmental/toxic tort litigation. He came to Jones Walker from Mobil Corporation in Fairfax, Virginia where he was the Team Lead for the Environmental Litigation Group. While at Mobil, he also served as counsel to the Marketing and Refining Division and the Mining and Minerals Division. He came to Mobil following three years as Corporate Counsel for the United Company. Prior to that he was an associate at Penn Stuart in Abingdon and Bristol, Virginia with a litigation practice. He graduated from the College of William and Mary with honors and received his J.D. in 1982 from the University of Richmond. He is the past Chairman of the ACCA Litigation Committee and the President of the Tennessee Chapter of ACCA. He also has served as President of the Board of Directors of Memphis Area Legal Services and is a member of the Tennessee Bar Association Access to Justice Committee and the Memphis Bar Association Access to Justice Committee. He serves as the Co-Chair of the Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative and also serves on the TBA Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity.

**Dean Sydney Beckman** is an experienced trial lawyer and academician. A former partner in the firm of Goodman, Clark & Beckman in Arlington, Texas, he also served for three years as a municipal judge pro tem and served periodically as a visiting family law magistrate. He has authored dozens of articles and numerous books in the area of family law, co-authored a textbook on Evidence, and recently published a

study aid for students on the subject of Evidence. Professor Beckman received his law degree from Baylor University School of Law. He has lectured throughout the United States and in Canada on using technology effectively in the classroom and has spoken throughout the years at various law related functions and CLE activities. He was selected for two consecutive years by his peers to be named a Texas Super Lawyer and appeared in Texas Monthly and Law and Politics Magazines. He also served on the Legislative Committee to the Family Law Section of the State Bar of Texas and holds an AV rating by Martindale-Hubbell.

**Barri Bernstein**, who has her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. from Vanderbilt University, is the executive director of the Tennessee Bar Foundation. The Foundation's purposes are two-fold: to honor attorneys who have distinguished themselves in the profession and to administer the IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers' Trust Accounts) program. As of 2011, that program has made grant awards in excess of \$17,000,000 to law-related, public projects across the state. She is active in professional and community activities including past service as a founding member of the board of directors of Hands On Nashville and currently as a member of the board of the Tennessee Supreme Court Historical Society and the Metropolitan Davidson County (Nashville) Historic Zoning Commission.

**Caitlin Berberich** is an attorney with Southern Migrant Legal Services, a project affiliated with the Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, in Nashville, Tenn. She represents migrant workers, litigating work-related claims on their behalf. Caitlin is a graduate of Emory Law School.

**Ellen Black** earned her Bachelor of Arts degree summa cum laude from Mississippi University for Women and her Juris Doctor degree magna cum laude from Texas Tech University School of Law, where she held the position of articles editor on the Texas Tech Law Review. Prior to joining Belmont University College of Law, Professor Black practiced law for several years at the firm Chadbourne & Parke LLP in New York City. While at Chadbourne, she practiced in the areas of products liability and commercial litigation and served on the recruiting committee. Prior to practicing at Chadbourne, Professor Black worked as an associate at the firm Gholson, Hicks & Nichols in Columbus, Mississippi. She also taught as an adjunct instructor at Mississippi University for Women. Professor Black is a member of the New York, Tennessee, and Mississippi bars. She teaches Medical Malpractice, Products Liability and Family Law and serves as Director of the Externship Program. She is also the faculty sponsor for the Women's Law Student Association.

**Frank Cantrell** has served as General Counsel for MALS since 2008, Cantrell supervises the management of program operations to ensure high quality, effective and efficient legal assistance is delivered to MALS clients consistent with the Code of Professional Responsibility, Legal Services Corporation regulations and other funding requirements, program policies and procedures. He also serves as Managing Attorney of the Consumer Law unit. He joined MALS in 2004 as an attorney in the Consumer law unit. Prior to that, he was in private practice in the Memphis area for 25 years. He is an honors graduate of the University of Memphis (then Memphis State University) and received his Juris Doctor from its School of Law in 1979. He served as an Adjunct Professor of Legal Method from 1979 to 1992, while engaging in the full-time private practice of law. He later worked as an Adjunct Instructor teaching Employment Law at Webster University. From 2001 to 2004, he maintained a full-time private mediation and arbitration practice and prior to that, was partner at Jackson, Shields, Yeiser & Cantrell, where he practiced labor and employment law. Well-respected in the legal community, Cantrell is active in the Memphis Bar Association, the National Bar Association Ben F. Jones Chapter and the American Inns of Court Leo Bearman, Sr. Chapter. He is an accomplished author and educator, having presented, taught and written a number of pieces on subjects relating to the law, human resource issues and mediation.

**Emma Covington** has been a paralegal with West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc. since 1996. She assists the agency director and other staff attorneys in providing legal assistance, oversight, and fulfillment of HUD grant administration to sub-grantees. Additionally, she provides paralegal research and direct client services in all areas with special focus on Mortgage Default and Reverse Mortgages for Seniors. Covington has a Bachelor Degree in Professional Studies as a Paralegal with a Non-Profit Management minor and certification from American Humanics Training Institute, Inc.

**Andrae Crismon** is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University and a 2003 graduate of Vanderbilt University Law School, where he was Associate Editor of the Journal of Transnational Law. He joined the Legal Aid Society in 2007. In 2006 he was the In-house Counsel/Director of Operations for Victory 2006, the coordinated campaign for the Democratic Party in Tennessee. He also worked with the Office of General Counsel for the Tennessee Department of Health and clerked with the Honorable Inez Smith Reid, District of Columbia Court of Appeals. In 2008 he served as a member of the Tennessee Bar Association's House of Delegates. He is a

member of the Rutherford County United Way Agency Council, the Rutherford Connection, the Lion's Club, is chair of the Rutherford-Cannon County Bar Association Public Service/Community Relations Committee and serves on the Tennessee Bar Association's Access to Justice Committee. He is a member of the Leadership Middle Tennessee, Class of 2013. His personal interests include golf, fishing and reading John Grisham novels. He serves as pastor of a church in Murfreesboro.

**Richard H. Dinkins** is a Judge for the Tennessee Court of Appeals, Middle District. Prior to this, Dinkins was an associate at the Law Firm of the Honorable Avon N. Williams, a partner at Williams and Dinkins, then a member of Dodson, Parker, Dinkins & Behm P.C. Following this, Dinkins served as Chancellor for the Davidson County Chancery Court, Part IV, before being named to the Court of Appeals. Dinkins is actively involved in the legal community including, but not limited to, membership in the American, National, and Nashville Bar Associations, and Napier-Looby Bar Association where he was on the Board of Directors from 1981 - 83, and Vice President then President in 1984-85. Additionally, Dinkins is a former cooperating attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Educational Fund. He received his J.D. from Vanderbilt University School of Law.

**Debra House** is the Central Region Associate Director with Legal Aid of East Tennessee where she has practiced poverty law for 22 years. Deb is the immediate past chair of the TBA Access to Justice Committee as well as a member the executive council of the Family Law section. In addition, Deb is a past chair of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services. She is the Recording Secretary of the Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women and is past chair of the East Tennessee Lawyer's Association for Women. Deb received her Bachelor of Science Degree from Western Michigan University and her law degree from The University of Tennessee College of Law where she has served as an adjunct professor teaching a course in negotiation and dispute resolution. In her spare time Deb enjoys gardening, cooking and motorcycling.

**Gary Housepian** is a graduate of Houghton College and his law degree from the University of Detroit Law School. He became Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland in July 2007. From 2002 to 2007 he was Managing Attorney of the Disability Law and Advocacy Center of Tennessee (the state's protection and advocacy program). During that time, he was lead

counsel on a class action case that resulted in a five year settlement agreement that provided in-home Medicaid waiver services for thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities. From 1997 to 2001 he was managing attorney with LASMTC's Murfreesboro office. He has also worked as a trial attorney in private practice and as the General Counsel to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and then as General Counsel to the Tennessee Department of Human Services. He has worked as a staff attorney with the Tennessee Justice Center (TJC), the Legal Aid Society in Knoxville and as a VISTA attorney with Legal Services to Migrant Farm Workers in El Mirage, Arizona. While working with the TJC, he worked on several health care class action cases. He has served as a Hearing Committee Member for the Board of Professional Responsibility and as Chair of the Board of the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services. He has received many awards and recognitions, including the Arc of Tennessee Outstanding Community Leadership Award in 2005. He is a Fellow of the Nashville Bar Foundation. He is a member of the Tennessee Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission's Resource Development and Disability and Language Barriers Advisory Committees.

**Marilyn L. Hudson** received law degree from Rutgers University, Camden, NJ, and undergraduate degree from University of TN, magna cum laude. Hudson is presently in private practice at Kizer & Gammeltoft PC, Knoxville, which limits its practice to estate planning, probate and trust administration, and ancillary matters such as business succession planning. She served as TN Administrative Law Judge for fourteen years, was an Asst. US Attorney, Civil Div Chief, for EDTN and previously maintained a law practices primarily limited to employment law and domestic relations. Additionally, she has served as a county and municipal prosecutor and as a law clerk to US Federal Magistrate in EDPA. Hudson has a strong commitment to the provision of legal services for all, having served on the Board of Directors of LAET for 15 yrs (two terms as President, two terms as Treasurer, presently serving as President-elect) and on the TALS Board, having served as Chair from 2011-2012..

**Alex Hurder** is a clinical professor of law at the Vanderbilt University Law School who received his J.D. from Duke University. He is an expert on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and has written extensively on clinical legal education and disability law. Hurder and his students represent clients in special education cases and Social Security Disability appeals. He joined the Vanderbilt Legal Clinic and law faculty in 1993, after a legal career that included substantial litigation and policy expertise in special education and

disability cases. Additionally, Hurder is currently serving on the Council of the American Bar Association's Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities. He was chair of the ABA's Commission on Mental & Physical Disability Law from 2007 to 2010.

**Michele Johnson** is co-founder and managing attorney of the Tennessee Justice Center. In that role, she lobbied successfully to extend health care coverage to uninsured children in working families and participated in a landmark case establishing appeal rights for TennCare patients who are denied care by their HMO. She also continues to represent scores of individual children. Johnson is the winner of the 1999 Child Advocacy Award by the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. She was the Lawyer's Association for Women 2006 Nashville ATHENA Award nominee and Tennessee Alliance for Progress Long Haul award winner. Recently, Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC) recognized her work by awarding her a Lifetime Achievement Award for Advocacy. She is President-Elect of the board of TVC, and chair of the group's policy committee. Johnson serves on the Board of Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services, and was recently elected to the Nashville Bar Association Board of Directors. Johnson received her J.D. from the University of Tennessee College of Law.

**Meg Jones** is the Executive Director of the Community Legal Clinic located in Memphis, Tennessee. She has been the Executive Director since 2001.

**Susan L. Kay**, who has her J.D. from Vanderbilt University, has been the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs at the Vanderbilt University Law School since 2001. In addition to teaching in the Criminal Practice Clinic, Kay supervises the Trial Advocacy courses, and teaches courses on Professional Responsibility, Criminal Law, Evidence and Externships. She is active in many professional and service activities and is a past president of the Clinical Legal Education Association, past-chair of the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services' Board, and chair of the Board of the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland. Within the clinic, Professor Kay has conducted major public law litigation concerning jail overcrowding, inmates' rights and juvenile justice.

**Harrison McIver, III** received his J.D. from Rutgers University School of Law and began his legal career as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow at North Mississippi Rural Legal Services. He later became a managing attorney of the former Southwest Mississippi Legal Services and North Mississippi Rural Legal Services before

becoming Executive Director of the Central Mississippi Legal Services in Jackson, MS. After 14 years in Mississippi, he was appointed Executive Director of the Project Advisory Group-the National Organization of Legal Services Program, which merged in to NLADA. In 1998, McIver was hired as Executive Director /CEO of MALS. Since arriving in Memphis, McIver has served on various national, state and local organization boards including Chair of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, member of Tennessee House of Delegates and the Memphis Bar Association and local National Bar Association (Ben F. Jones Chapter) Boards of Directors. He received the local National Bar Association's A. A. Latting Award, and was inducted as a fellow in both the Tennessee Bar Foundation and the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Foundation. In 2008, he was selected as a fellow in the American Bar Foundation.

**LaFran (Fran) Plunk** is a paralegal with West Tennessee Legal Services. She works out of their Jackson office. Fran is a member of Tennessee's Paralegal Association where she has served as West Tennessee Chapter Vice President and Program Chair.

**Lisa Primm** became Executive Director of the Disability Law and Advocacy Center of Tennessee (DLAC) in 2012. Lisa is a former TALS employee, having worked as the Policy and Training Director from 2008-2012. Prior to that, she served for over ten years as Director of the TennCare Partners Advocacy Program, a service of the Mental Health Association of Middle TN. She holds a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of TN, and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Alma College in Michigan. She and her husband jointly run a martial arts program in the public school system in Wilson County.

**Danny Schaffzin** is an Assistant Professor of Law and has recently transitioned into the role of Director of Clinical Programs and Externships at the University of Memphis School of Law. In addition to teaching the Civil Litigation Clinic, Schaffzin teaches Trial Advocacy and coaches the law school's National Trial Team with Professor Kate Traylor Schaffzin. He has also taught Contracts I and II. Prior to joining the University of Memphis faculty, Professor Schaffzin taught for two years at the University of North Dakota School of Law, instructing the school's Housing and Employment Litigation Clinic. After graduating from Temple University School of Law in 2000, Professor Schaffzin began his career at Pepper Hamilton LLP in Philadelphia, practicing for five years as an associate in the firm's Health Effects Litigation Practice Group. While in private practice, Professor Schaffzin maintained an active pro bono practice, including work on a successful death penalty appeal



under the Pennsylvania Post-Conviction Relief Act. He was a recipient of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Pro Bono Award in 2005.

**Linda Warren Seely** is an alumna of Memphis State University with a B.A., cum laude, and a J.D. She serves as a Managing Attorney and Director of Pro Bono Programs at Memphis Area Legal Services. Previously, Seely served as Managing Attorney at West Tennessee Legal Services for the Pro Bono Project and as the West Tennessee Health Care Consortium Manager. Seely is a past recipient of the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Association/Young Lawyers Section Award for Outstanding Service to the Pro Bono Panel for Senior Citizens and the B. Riney Green Cooperative Advocacy Award from the Tennessee Association of Legal Services, Inc. In 2003, Seely was recognized as the Tennessee Bar Association Public Service Attorney of the Year and in 2006 and 2009 she received the Tennessee Bar Association's Presidents Award. She currently serves as the Treasurer of the Memphis Bar Association.

**Casey Gill Summar** is the Director of the Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts program, formerly the Tennessee Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (TNVLA). Co-founder of TNVLA, she opened the office as its Executive Director in September 2006. Casey is also an adjunct Professor of Law at Vanderbilt University, her alma mater. In addition to a J.D. from Vanderbilt, Casey holds a B.F.A in Photography from Belmont University. She is admitted to the bar of Tennessee, and previously clerked with the Georgia Lawyers for the Arts and various entertainment law firms in Nashville, TN. An alumna of the Young Leaders Council, Casey is active in the Nashville arts and legal communities.

**Elizabeth (Liz) Slagle Todaro** is the Access to Justice and Public Education Coordinator at the Tennessee Bar Association. Liz has over 15 years of experience in the fields of domestic violence, family law, criminal justice, women's issues, political advocacy and education reform. Liz earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Emory University and a law degree from the City University of New York Law School. She worked in the Battered Women's Rights Clinic during law school, representing clients in NYC family courts. She also worked with the Incarcerated Mother's Law Project of the Women's Prison Association, serving clients at Riker's Island Jail and in other N.Y. state correctional facilities.

**Anne-Louise Wirthlin** is the Administrative Office of the Courts' Access to Justice Coordinator (AOC). Wirthlin previously worked as a programs manager at the AOC,

where she provided staff support to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Commission. She also practiced law in Brentwood and worked as a contract attorney with TennCare. Wirthlin earned her law degree in 2004 from the University of Tennessee and a Master of Law from the University of Alabama in 2007.

**David R. Yoder** is Executive Director of Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) and has dedicated 35 years to serving the civil legal needs of low-income people. He has served as a staff attorney, ten years as Executive Director of Legal Services of Northwest Indiana in Gary, Indiana and since 1993 as Executive Director of LAET. His litigation record includes federal and state courts and both trial and appellate practice. Yoder's experience includes early leadership in domestic violence response beginning with client representation and areas of practice have included public benefits, employment, housing, education, consumer and the law of not-for-profit corporations. Yoder's career also includes being an adjunct professor and serving as Lake County (Indiana) Bar Association President, Indiana Bar Association Pro Bono Committee Chair, Tennessee Association of Legal Services Board Chair, and South East Project Directors and Administrators Association President. He has extensive legislative advocacy, and training experience. Yoder is a graduate of Purdue University and Valparaiso University School of Law.

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